

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

May 19, 2025

Mari Davidson
Waymo LLC
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

SUBJECT: Disposition of Waymo Advice Letter 0003

Dear Ms. Davidson:

Pursuant to Decision (D.) 20-11-046, as modified by D.21-05-017, and Resolution TL-19137, the Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division (CPED) of the California Public Utilities Commission approves Waymo LLC's (Waymo) Advice Letter 0003. Waymo's updated Passenger Safety Plan (PSP), submitted in connection with its expanded operational design domain (ODD) for deployment approved by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), is approved. A status certificate is attached for your records.

On March 26, 2025, Waymo submitted Advice Letter (AL) 0003 seeking approval of its updated PSP and thus authorization for expansion of its Phase I Driverless Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Deployment service to additional portions of the San Francisco Bay Area Peninsula, including the City of San José. No protests to Waymo's advice letter were submitted. CPED received 23 timely supportive responses.

Attachment 1 contains further discussion of Waymo's request, responses from stakeholders, and CPED's disposition.

Please contact CPED AV Programs staff via email at AVPrograms@cpuc.ca.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua Huneycutt".

Joshua Huneycutt
Manager, Transportation Licensing and Analysis Branch
Consumer Protection & Enforcement Division

Advice Letter Status Certificate

Status of Advice Letter 0003 as of May 19, 2025

Waymo LLC (TCP 38152)
Attention: Mari Davidson
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Advice Letter Subject: **Waymo-0003, Requesting approval of Waymo's updated Passenger Safety Plan in connection with Waymo's expanded deployment ODD**

Division Assigned: Consumer Protection and Enforcement

Date Filed: 03-26-2025

Disposition: **Approved**

Effective Date: **05-19-2025**

CPUC Contact Information: AVPrograms@cpuc.ca.gov

TCP Contact Information: Mari Davidson
waymo-regulatory-permits@google.com

Attachment 1: Staff Review and Disposition

Background

In Decision (D.) 20-11-046 (as modified by D.21-05-017) (Deployment Decision), the Commission established the criteria and requirements for Transportation Charter-Party Carrier permit holders (Carriers) to collect fares for passenger service using autonomous vehicles (AVs). The Deployment Decision builds on the Commission's earlier decision, D.18-05-043, that sets out the requirements for Carriers to pilot passenger service using AVs without charging fares, and on the Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) regulations and permits for AV manufacturers.

Under California law, the DMV determines if AVs can operate on public roads.¹ To deploy AVs, the AV manufacturer must apply to the DMV for a Permit to Deploy Autonomous Vehicles on Public Streets.² DMV regulations establish the requirements for that application, including that the manufacturer identify in the application the Operational Design Domain (ODD) in which the AVs are designed to operate. The DMV reviews submitted applications, and if it determines the manufacturers have provided all required information and certifications and that the DMV is satisfied the AVs are safe to operate on public roads, issues the permit.³ DMV regulations further require that manufacturers submit an amended application for public deployment prior to implementing certain changes, including changes that expand the geographic areas where AVs may operate.⁴ Manufacturers may not implement these changes prior to review and approval by the DMV.

The Deployment Decision creates two sets of requirements for Carriers wishing to collect fares for AV service—one set of requirements for service with a safety driver present in the vehicle (Drivered Deployment service) and one set of requirements for service without a safety driver (Driverless Deployment service). Given the DMV's role in regulating AVs' safe operations on public roads, the Commission's requirements focus on compliance with the DMV permitting and on issues specific to passenger service. To offer Driverless Deployment service, among other things, a Carrier must meet the requirements contained in Ordering Paragraph (OP) 7, including holding a DMV Permit to Deploy Autonomous Vehicles on Public Streets and maintaining insurance for the AVs. In addition, a Carrier must prepare a Passenger Safety Plan (PSP), and in the PSP, must describe its policies and procedures to minimize risk for all passengers in its driverless vehicles. This includes, at a minimum, how the Carrier will:

- Minimize safety risks to passengers traveling in a ride operated without a driver in the vehicle;
- Minimize safety risks to passengers traveling in a shared, driverless ride, including prevention and response to assaults and harassments (only for Carriers applying to offer shared rides);

¹ Veh. Code, § 38750.

² Cal. Code Regs., tit. 13, § 228.06.

³ Cal. Code Regs., tit. 13, § 228.08.

⁴ Cal. Code Regs., tit. 13, § 228.10.

- Respond to unsafe scenarios outside and within the vehicle, such as hostile individuals;
- Educate and orient passengers about the technology, experience, and safety procedures;
- Ensure customers can safely identify, enter, and exit the AV they requested;
- Enable passengers to contact the AV service provider during the ride and ensure the passengers receive a timely and complete response;
- Collect, respond to, and retain any passenger comments and complaints; and
- Ensure the safety measures described above are accessible to and apply to all passengers, including those with limited mobility, vision impairments, or other disabilities.⁵

The Commission established an advice letter process, modeled on the rules set forth in General Order (GO) 96-B, for Driverless Deployment applications and modifications. To offer Driverless Deployment service, the Carrier must submit an application to the Director of the Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division in the form of a Tier 3 Advice Letter.⁶ At any point following this approval, a Carrier that then wishes to change its operations in a way that would “materially affect the approaches” in its PSP must submit a revised PSP in the form of a Tier 2 advice letter.⁷ Per GO 96-B, Tier 2 advice letters are appropriately disposed of by Commission staff “where statutes or Commission orders have required the action proposed in the advice letter, or have authorized the action with sufficient specificity, that [staff] need only determine as a technical matter whether the proposed action is within the scope of what has already been authorized by statutes or Commission orders.”

On December 12, 2022, Waymo submitted Waymo-0001, a Tier 3 advice letter seeking authorization to offer Driverless Deployment service to the limits of its DMV-approved ODD. At that time, Waymo’s ODD included San Francisco and portions of San Mateo County. On August 10, 2023, the Commission approved Waymo’s advice letter, finding that Waymo demonstrated it had met the requirements set out in the Deployment Decision for Driverless Deployment service.⁸

On January 11, 2024, the DMV approved an expanded ODD for Waymo that authorized Waymo to deploy driverless AVs in portions of the Los Angeles area and additional portions of the San Francisco Peninsula. On January 19, 2024, Waymo submitted Waymo-0002, a Tier 2 advice letter seeking approval of its revised Passenger Safety Plan (PSP) in connection with this expanded ODD for AV deployment. On March 1, 2024, CPED approved Waymo’s advice letter, finding Waymo complied with the requirements of the Deployment Decision. Following requests for review of staff’s disposition by several protestants, the Commission affirmed staff’s approval via Resolution TL-19150, which was adopted by the Commission on June 20, 2024.

On March 17, 2025, the DMV approved an expanded ODD for Waymo that authorizes Waymo to deploy driverless AVs in additional portions of the San Francisco Bay Area Peninsula, including the City of San José. On March 26, 2025, Waymo submitted Waymo-0003, a Tier 2

⁵ D.20-11-046, p. 83 (as modified by D.21-05-017), OP 8.

⁶ *Id.*, OP 11.

⁷ D.20-11-046, p. 83 (as modified by D.21-05-017).

⁸ Res. TL-19144, *Resolution Approving Waymo LLC’s Application for Phase I Driverless Autonomous Vehicle Passenger Deployment Program* (as modified by D.23-11-053).

advice letter seeking approval of its revised Passenger Safety Plan (PSP) in connection with Waymo's expanded ODD for AV deployment. In its advice letter, Waymo seeks—through approval of its updated PSP— authorization to expand its ability to collect fares for passenger service using driverless AVs to the areas approved in its updated ODD.

Protests, Responses, and Replies

GO 96-B provides that any person (including individuals, groups, or organizations) may protest or respond to an advice letter within 20 days of its submittal. Protests and responses to Waymo's advice letter were due on April 15, 2025. CPED received 23 responses in support of Waymo's proposed expansion. No protests were submitted; uncontested Tier 2 advice letters may be approved by staff.

Per GO 96-B, the carrier shall reply to each protest and may reply to any response. Waymo did not submit replies to the responses.

Responses in Support

Responses in support were submitted by 23 organizations or individuals, including disability advocates, community organizations, economic development organizations, elected officials, and transportation advocates.

Responses in support were received from (in alphabetical order):

- AbilityPath
- African American Community Service Agency
- Avenidas
- Bay Area Council
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley
- Community Services Agency of Mountain View and Los Altos
- Daly City Partnership
- Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley
- Assemblymember Josh Hoover (7th District)
- Assemblymember Alex Lee (24th District)
- Member of Congress Sam Liccardo (16th District, California)
- LifeMoves
- Los Altos Mountain View Community Foundation
- Mayor Matt Mahan (City of San José)
- San Jose Chamber of Commerce
- San Jose Downtown Association
- San Mateo County Economic Development Association
- Sharks Sports and Entertainment
- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- Veloz

- Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley

These responses generally highlighted the potential safety, accessibility, economic, and environmental benefits of an expansion of Waymo's driverless AV service. Many responses also described Waymo's engagement with the community and highlighted potential benefits for specific populations including people with disabilities, seniors, bicyclists, and other underserved groups such as lower-income people, youths and families, women, and people experiencing homelessness. Responses from San José-area stakeholders emphasized the benefits of Waymo as a new transportation option, particularly considering upcoming large-scale events such as the Super Bowl and the FIFA World Cup in 2026.

Disposition of Waymo's Advice Letter

As required by the Deployment Decision and Resolution TL-19137, Waymo submitted an updated PSP in connection with expansion of its ODD to additional portions of the San Francisco Bay Area Peninsula. The PSP describes the policies and procedures Waymo has in place to minimize risk for all passengers in driverless vehicles. These include education of passengers and the public, in-vehicle safety and accessibility features, vehicle identification features and pickup and drop-off protocols, protocols for responding to adverse events both within and outside the vehicle, and protocols for communicating with and supporting passengers.

Waymo's updated PSP includes expanded discussion of its rider support teams, which provide assistance remotely and in the field when AVs encounter potentially disruptive events. Waymo describes the roles of each of these teams in responding to adverse events. This includes reviewing and assisting the AV in navigating the scene, providing support to passengers, and engaging with first responders, including transitioning the AV to manual mode for removal if needed. Waymo's PSP also discusses enhanced tools and protocols for incident response, including the vehicle's ability to play external audio messages to communicate with nearby road users, first responders, or potential bad actors (in cases of vehicle tampering or vandalism).

Waymo's updated PSP and the new features and enhanced protocols described therein demonstrate Waymo's attention to continuous evaluation and improvement of its technology, safety practices, and aspects of its operations involving humans (such as Rider Support and Remote Assistance) that minimize risk of driverless passenger service operations in a larger and more diverse ODD.

CPED finds that Waymo has complied with the requirements of the Deployment Decision. Its updated PSP is complete relative to the requirements described in the Deployment Decision and is reasonable for its planned service. Therefore, CPED approves Waymo's updated PSP and authorizes expansion of Waymo's Driverless Deployment service to the additional areas of the San Francisco Bay Area it has requested. Waymo may begin fare-d driverless passenger service operations in the specified areas, effective today.